

Section II (Remarks)**A. Summary of Amendment to the Claims**

By the present Amendment, claim 40 has been amended to include the features of former claim 39, and claims 33, 34, 39, 41, and 42 have been cancelled. The cancellation of claims 33, 34, 39, 41, and 42 is without prejudice, and Applicants expressly reserve the right to pursue such claims in a continuing application. Claims 43-45 were cancelled previously. The amendment to claim 40 is fully consistent with and supported by the originally-filed disclosure of this application. No new matter within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §132(a) has been introduced by the foregoing amendments.

B. Subject Matter Indicated to be Allowable; and Response to Claim Objections

In the April 6, 2009 Office Action at page 4 thereof, claims 1-32, 35-38, and 46-47 were indicated to be allowable over the prior art of record.

In the April 6, 2009 Office Action at page 1 thereof, claim 40 was objected to. Although the April 6, 2009 Office Action does not detail the reasons for the objection to claim 40, Applicants assume and understand that such objection relates to claim 40 being dependent upon a rejected base claim (i.e., claim 39), but that claim 40 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim (claim 39, which has been cancelled herewith) and any intervening claim.

Claim 40 has been amended herewith to include all of the features of claim 39. Based on the amendment to claim 40 to include all the features of former claim 39, withdrawal of the objection to claim 40 is warranted, and is respectfully requested.

C. Response to Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

In the April 6, 2009 Office Action, claims 33-34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. patent No. 3,437,511 to Hough et al. ("Hough"); claim 39 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable for obviousness over U.S. Patent No.

5,834,627 to Ricco et al. ("Ricco") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,728,494 to Berchtold et al. ("Berchtold"); and claims 41-42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable for obviousness over Ricco in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,367,127 to Messing et al. ("Messing").

Claims 33, 34, 39, 41, and 42 have been cancelled herewith to expedite issuance of a patent on the present application. The cancellation of claims 33, 34, 39, 41, and 42 is without prejudice, and Applicants expressly reserve the right to pursue such claims in a continuing application.

Due to the cancellation of claims 33, 34, 39, 41, and 42, the rejections of such claims under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) or 35 U.S.C. 103 are moot. No further basis exists to object to or reject any claim of the present application, such that issuance of a Notice of Allowance is warranted.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing, all of Applicants' pending claims are patentably distinguished over the art, and in form and condition for allowance. The examiner is requested to favorably consider the foregoing, and to responsively issue a Notice of Allowance without delay. If any issues require further resolution, the examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney at (919) 419-9350 to discuss same.

Respectfully submitted,

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